DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 542 RC 018 494

AUTHOR Bell, Teri L.; And Others
TITLE Perceptions of Future Special Education Teachers concerning Rural Teaching Environments.
PUB DATE 19 Mar 91
NOTE 36p.; In: Reaching Our Potential: Rural Education in the 90's. Conference Proceedings, Rural Education Symposium (Nashville, TN, March 17-20, 1991); see RC 018 473.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Environment; Education Majors; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Rural Environment; *Social Influences; *Special Education; *Student Attitudes; Suburban Environment; Teacher Education; Urban Environment

ABSTRACT

This study examined attitudes of prospective special educators regarding urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments. A total of 588 student members of the Council for Exceptional Children representing 49 universities were surveyed. The questionnaire, composed of 67 questions, examined student reasons for being in special education. It also assessed attitudes concerning social, cultural, personal, and professional issues regarding various teaching environments. The students reported they were in special education for altruistic motives. They viewed suburban locations for teaching as the most desirable from a social, economic, and educational support perspective. Only 20 percent of students who grew up in rural areas were likely to return to rural areas to teach. Most beginning teachers are drawn to school districts that care for their students, have a high level of parental involvement, and a committment of educational resources. These districts should have few problems in recruiting special education teachers, no matter where they are located. However, 60 percent of the total sample desired suburban placements and 23 percent desired rural placements. Socialization seems to be a major issue in preference, while salaries do not seem to be important except for those wanting to teach in an urban setting. Statistical analyses of the student questionnaire were presented in tables. The appendices include graphs illustrating the degree of interaction between student perceptions and type of environment. The student questionnaire is also included. (LP)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED342542

ACRES PRESENTATION
Presenter: Teri Bell
Co-Presenter: Kay Bull
Diane Montgomery
Day: March 19, 1991
Time: 2:45pm - 3:45pm

# Perceptions of Future Special Education Teachers concerning Rural Teaching Environments

RC018494

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Doris Helge
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Teri L. Bell
Kay S. Bull
B. Keith Salyer
Jeanne M. Barrett
Diane Montgomery

# Perceptions of Future Special Education Teachers Concerning Rural Teaching Environments

Oklahoma State University

Presented at the American Council on Rural Special Education Annual Conference, Nashville TN, March, 1991

RC018494

## Abstract

In an effort to ascertain the desired teaching location of beginning special education teachers, 588 student members of Council for Exceptional Children representing 49 universities were questioned. Generally, they reported that they were in special education for altruistic motives. They viewed suburban locations for teaching as the most desirable from both social, economic and educational support perspectives. Students who grew up in rural areas were more likely to favor returning to rural areas to teach than those from urban or suburban areas but only 20% were so inclined.

The variables which drew beginning teachers to school districts were care for students, parental involvement and educational resources. Districts which could provide these should have few recruiting problems, no matter where they are located. However for our students, other things being equal, the majority, over 60%, desired suburban placements, 23% desired rural placements and urban placement came in last. The major issue seems to be one of socialization in these choices. Salaries do not seem to be an issue for any except those who want to teach in urban areas.

# Perceptions of Future Special Education Teachers Concerning Rural Teaching Environments

For many rural communities, the recruitment and retention of special educators has emerged as a prominent concern. In the 1983 National Rural Project survey (Helge,1983), only 17% of the districts surveyed related that they had an adequate number of special education personnel.

Rural school districts across the country are confronting a dilemma unique to their geographical location. While there may be a shortage of teachers in rural districts, urban districts experience other prominent difficulties. These problems influence young teachers when they decide where they will apply for teaching positions. In urban school districts, the plight of teaching children who lead lives outside the school more financially and socially rewarding than the school curriculum is a prominent problem teachers must face (Grant 1989). While urban districts are trying to meet the needs of a changing school population, rural districts are finding that recruitment and retention of qualified teachers is their main concern. Helge (1984) in her study concerning rural special education found that 94% of the states responding to a national survey reported recruitment and retention as a major problem in rural education agencies. With rural schools comprising the majority of the nation's educational systems, it is evident that a viable solution is needed to solve the rural recruitment and retention problems.

Why has the recruitment of educators and special educators into rural communities become such a difficult task? Bryant (1987) notes that pay differences between small and large schools, the quality of goods and services, working conditions, and the vulnerability to change may give larger schools an edge. Rural cultural factors such as conservatism and suspicion of outside interferences combined with long distances to travel under adverse circumstances created serious problems in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel (Helge,1981). Davis (1987) reported that 81% of the rural regular and special education teachers he surveyed expressed great concern about feelings of professional isolation. Davis continued by stating that even in consolidated rural districts, teachers reported a sense of professional isolation whenever they were unable to interact with staffs of other schools or stimulated by educational presentations related to their specific areas of professional needs.

Helge (1981) added that attitudinal problems clearly

prolonged the time required to make programmatic changes. Unique problems exist for special education teachers who may offer the only program of its kind within a district (Kirmer, Lockwood, Mickler & Sweeney, 1984). Not only is the relative isolation from other special educators a factor in recruitment and retention, but the limited staff development opportunities create stressors in personnel retention.

Professional isolation common to many rural areas is compounded by a sense of social and geographical isolation. Davis (1987) defined social isolation as the separation from the amenities of urban life, such as medical specialists, extensive shopping opportunities and cultural institutions. Rural teachers often experience difficulty in locating adequate housing when assigned to a small community. Small towns and communities limit privacy (Williams and Cross, 1985). Teachers are more visible in the small communities in which they live (Barker, 1985; Hoyt, 1981; Sher, 1977). This makes dating more difficult (Muse, Parsons & Heppe, 1975). Helge (1981) found that social isolation, extreme weather conditions and inadequate housing make it difficult to employ special education teachers. Sher (1974) asserts that many of the best teachers select urban communities where they find greater opportunities in terms of the education of their own children, medical services, cultural opportunities and entertainment.

The interaction of social, cultural and professional concerns influences the recruitment and retention of qualified educators in rural communities. Teacher education programs have been noted by some as a resolution to this multifaceted issue. Sher (1978) proclaimed that only a handful of higher education institutions offer training programs for teachers preparing for rural service. New programs must be created in order to build a corp of teachers who are adequately prepared for the unique challenges of rural schools.

Examining perceptions of preservice teachers toward school locations may yield a number of stereotypes about school districts which potentially influence where young teachers choose to teach (Gleadow & Bandy, 1980; Bull & Hyle 1989). For example, rural districts are typically seen as being poor in money resources (Williams & Cross, 1985). The culture within rural areas is viewed as setting strict limits on what teachers can do socially (Sharp, 1974). Stereotypically, rural areas are believed to be less available places to live, least affordable housing (Helge & Mans, 1981), limited entertainment, limited police services, different value systems (Swift, 1984),

limited special interest organizations and fraternal of social organizations. On the other hand, it may be perceived that rural school districts have fewer discipline problems and the problems are less severe than their urban counterparts. They also are likely to have more parent involvement because the students are more involved; stronger local control/administration and so forth. Socialization opportunities are likely to be limited in rural ares. The more different the teacher is racially, sexually, in dress, and other areas, the more likely they are to standout in public eye.

There are a number of reasons that people want to teach in special education, some of which may impact recruitment. These include having a special person in one's immediate family, having had previous experiences with exceptional persons, taking course work in exceptionality, knowing about teacher shortages in special education (Bull & Hyle, 1989) and wanting to help the less fortunate. All of these are altruistic reasons for wanting to teach special education. Others, who are more external, talk of higher pay for special education teachers (Seifert & Kurtz, 1983), reduced class size (Bull & Hyle, 1990) and less administration control and interference. When we look at the perceptions of rural and urban teachers knowing their rationale for coming into the field may improve recruiting.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine what attitudes future special educators have regarding urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments. Attitudes concerning social, cultural, personal, and professional issues were assessed.

## Methodology

### Subjects

A list of universities (N=223) currently maintaining a Student Council for Exceptional Children organization was purchased from Council for Exceptional Children. The advisors or presidents of these groups were contacted to obtain access to students in undergraduate special education classes. Sixty-six leaders responded and of these forty-nine were able to distribute questionnaires. Constraints to participation were that some colleges were on a quarter system, some were not able to distribute questionnaires within the time, and some were not meeting during the questionnaire time frame. The final sample was comprised of undergraduate special education majors enrolled at forty-nine universities. Each of the

advisors or presidents was given twenty-five questionnaires to distribute. In some cases, this was more than the number of Student Council for Exceptional Children students enrolled in the chapter. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 1225. Of these 588 were returned. This yielded a return rate of 48%.

Not surprising, the subjects for this study were predominantly female (N=521) with a few males (N=61). The average age was 25 years. Most were single (N=411), with some married (N=147) and a few divorced (N=22) and widowed (N=3). Subjects were mainly caucasian (N=529) with a scattering of minorities (Black=10, Indian=20, Hispanic=12, and Oriental=5). They were preparing to teach Emotionally Disturbed (N=254), Sensory Impaired (N=68), Learning Disabled (N=362), Mentally Handicapped (N=328) and Physically Handicapped (N=163). When asked the level at which they wanted to teach, 103 desired primary; 290 desired elementary; 73 chose junior high and 100 wanted high school. When asked where they grew up, 112 were raised in urban areas; 168 in suburban areas; 276 in rural areas; and 26 in a mixture of the three. The great majority did not have a relative with learning problems (N=437) but 141, more than one would expect by chance, did have such a relative.

**Instument**

The questionnaire (See Appendix A), was composed of 67 questions focusing on cultural, social and professional issues. Perceptions concerning urban, suburban and rural environments were solicited with additional questions concerning how these perceptions will influence their future career decisions. This questionnaire had been previously reviewed by a number of rural special educators and special education faculty members to insure content validity.

**Results**

Included in the questionnaire were questions relating to the respondents' perceptions of special education, why they were in special education and what their expectations were. The instrument also assessed their perceptions of school districts by location (urban, rural, suburban) and whether or not things like teachers salaries, resources, etc. would influence their choice of work location. Subjects were asked about their perceptions of setting (rural, urban,

suburban) and various social problems which might be evinced therein. Finally they were asked about locations in terms of their perceptions of the location, e.g., availability of housing and whether or not this would be an influence on their choice of work location. The majority wanted to teach in suburban districts (N=356), followed by rural (N=135) and urban (N=65). Below we examine each of these areas in summary and by individual items to see if those who were raised in different locations respond differently.

## Perceptions of Special Education

Seven reasons for being special educators were presented. Each of these were analyzed using a one-way (rural, urban, suburban) ANOVA examining level of influence. None were found to be significantly different. Data were analyzed for both growing up location and desired teaching location. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the seven reasons by each set of locations.

Four expectations about special education were examined. Again, these were compared by location in which the students had been raised using one-way ANOVAs. There were no significant differences. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations.

Examining the reasons for being a special education, Table 1, we see that there are no differences by either growing up or desired teaching location. The items which have the strongest influence are desire to help the less fortunate, shortages of special education teachers, personal contact with an exceptional child and a desire to work with children who are rejected by other teachers. Generally then, the motive is altruistic. The same relationships hold whether the data is divided on where the students grew up or where they desire to teach. The same relationships hold when expectations are examined in Table 2. Again there are no differences by location and having had previous contact with an exceptional individual as an influence of choice of major.

Examining Table 3 we see that in relation to perceptions of school districts there were significant main effects and interactions for both growing up location and desired teaching location for both positively and negatively worded items. Looking at the positive items we see that those who grew up in rural areas looked most positively on rural areas, but a smaller number felt this was true in terms of where they desire to teach. In terms of desire to teach, suburban areas are thought to be almost equal to rural placements. Table 3B shows negative items. It follows

the same pattern with the urban placement being seen as the least desirable. Those who grew up in rural areas show the fewest negative responses for rural areas.

**Perceptions of Districts**

District perceptions were summed and analyzed using two 3x3 ANOVAs; one for positive and one for negative items. Table 3 provides their results. The main effects and interactions are graphed in Tables 3A and 3B. Individual by item analyses were conducted across groups using one-way AVOVAs to determine which variables had the most influence for the various groups. The data were examined for both growing up location and desired teaching location. These data are reported in Table 4.

When we examine these ANOVAs, we find one significant difference based on where the students grew up. That significant item is rural students are less influenced by the availability of resources than are suburban raised students. A similar pattern is found for resources based on desired teaching location; teachers who desire rural placements are less influenced by the availability of resources. Those who desire rural placements are less influenced by negative attitudes toward exceptional children than are those who desire suburban placements. Rural placement teachers are also less influenced by salaries and resources than are those who desire suburban and urban placements. When looking at the means of the items that influence, we see that (Table 4) three aspects of districts have the most overall influence: being supportive of special education students, higher levels of parent involvement and provisions of resources. The three least influential are: having few, or many discipline problems, and high salaries.

**Perceptions of Social Settings**

All social setting items were summed and subjected to a location (rural, urban, and suburban) by child residency location ANOVA (3X3). Its results were reported in Table 5. By Item results for social settings are reported in Table 6 in percentage form. This data consistently indicates that most subjects believe that rural settings would show the greatest number of problems.

Examining Table 5 perceptions of social settings we see that there are no differences based on where the potential teachers grew up or where they desire to teach. This means that there are no differences by locations.

When we examine the social settings by percentages we see that (Table 6) in nearly all cases rural settings are viewed as having significant problems, e.g., in dating, socializing, dress, entertainment, cultural isolation, gay/lesbian relationships, living with a significant other, being divorced, etc. Only in single parenting does the urban environment come close to that of the rural environment when acception problems are envisioned. This provides a rationale for why so many want to teach in a suburban area.

**Perceptions of Locations**

Location perceptions were summed and analyzed using two a 3x3 ANOVAs for positive and negative items. Table 7 provides their results. Table 7A show the results of group analysis. Individual item analyses were conducted across location groups to determine differential influences. Table 8 shows the item one-way ANOVAs for both growing up location and desired teaching location. Table 9 show the overall level of influence perceived by prospective teachers for variables related to locations.

The ANOVA for perceptions by location table shows differences by location for growing up and desired teaching location for negative but not for positive items. Generally there are more negative perceptions based on a desired teaching location than there are based on where the prospective teachers grew up. Urban settings are seen as more negative overall but interesting those who grew up rural see more negatives, from desired teaching location than do others.

When the individual items are examined they show (Table 8) a number of differences by growing up location: having available housing is less of an influence for suburban and rural students than it is for urban students. Having economic stability is less of an influence for rural than for urban students. Rural students are less influenced by the availability of entertainment than are urban or suburban students. When we look at desired teaching location the same pattern is shown. Rural students are less influence by availability of housing, economic stability, entertainment opportunities and finding dates than are those who desire to teach in urban and suburban settings.

When we examine the overall means (Table 9) we see that the strongest influences in location is a high crime rate (avoids the location). Followed by cost, housing availability and economic stability. The least influence is availability of dates and entertainment opportunities.

## Discussion

In terms of recruiting those who are to become special education teachers those who hire from suburban districts should have the easiest job. Our prospective teachers think that rural areas have the most problems, unless you grew up rural. In terms of where they grew up and where they wanted to teach there seems to be no difference on why they want to be special educators. Across the entire group, desire to help the less fortunate and being in contact with exceptional children lead to becoming special educators.

In terms of issues like salary, resources, and so forth none of these seem to influence those who would teach in rural areas over those who want to teach in other areas. Overall the entire group is most influenced by districts which are supportive of special education, the most resources, and the highest level of parental involvement.

Rural locations are least favored in terms of social setting. We believe this is why most of our subjects do not want to return to teach in rural areas.

Finally, having housing, entertainment opportunities, etc. do not seem to have a high level of influence on desired teaching location.

Most young special education teachers are drawn to teach in districts with good attitudes toward special education children, parental involvement and a commitment of resources. They are also as a class drawn toward the suburbs for social reasons. This does not bode well for either urban or rural districts. The old saying that rural teachers want to return to rural areas does not seem to be supported by these data.

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Why They Study Special Education

| Growing Up Location | URBAN (N=112)* | | SUBURBAN (N=168) | | RURAL (N=276) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | Sx | $\bar{X}$ | Sx | $\bar{X}$ | Sx |
| Smaller Class Size | 2.143 | .837 | 2.317 | .741 | 2.379 | .739 |
| Higher Pay | 2.384 | .726 | 2.512 | .687 | 2.476 | .666 |
| Shortages Teachers | 1.631 | .713 | 1.741 | .713 | 1.754 | .715 |
| Help Less Fortunate | 1.580 | .706 | 1.561 | .702 | 1.511 | .698 |
| Personal Contact Exchild | 1.661 | .766 | 1.473 | .695 | 1.634 | .775 |
| Desire work/w Exchild | 1.777 | .791 | 1.777 | .797 | 1.684 | .726 |
| Taking Exchild Course | 2.143 | .837 | 2.220 | .807 | 2.298 | .799 |

TABLE 1 (Con't)

Desired Teaching Location

| | URBAN (N=65) | | SUBURBAN (N=358) | | RURAL (N=134) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ |
| Smaller Class Size | 2.484 | .666 | 2.331 | .750 | 2.348 | .751 |
| Higher Pay | 2.453 | .733 | 2.445 | .701 | 2.550 | .585 |
| Shortages Teachers | 1.714 | .750 | 1.745 | .693 | 1.624 | .714 |
| Help Less Fortunate | 1.453 | .589 | 1.550 | .714 | 1.508 | .693 |
| Personal Contact Exchild | 1.600 | .725 | 1.552 | .749 | 1.692 | .780 |
| Desire Work w/ Exchild | 1.641 | .743 | 1.720 | .770 | 1.820 | .747 |
| Taking Exchild Course | 2.204 | .820 | 2.221 | .871 | 2.333 | .758 |

*1=Strong Influence, 2=Slight Influence, 3= No Influence

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations by Growing Up Location for Special Education Expectations

| | URBAN (N=65)* | | SUBURBAN (N=357) | | R U R A L (N=133) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ |
| Additional Pay SPED | 1.738 | .433 | 1.804 | .398 | 1.774 | .438 |
| Previous Contact SPED Individual | 1.169 | .378 | 1.204 | .404 | 1.258 | .439 |
| Teacher Shortages SPED | 1.338 | .477 | 1.289 | .454 | 1.286 | .453 |
| SPED 1 ST Choice | 1.662 | .477 | 1.501 | .501 | 1.541 | .500 |

*Yes=1, No=2

TABLE 3

Perception of Districts and Their Problems

Positive (Items 1,2,3,6,7,8)

| | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Residence | 88.522 | 2 | 44.261 | 9.101 | .000 |
| Desired Teaching | 55.880 | 2 | 27.940 | 5.745 | .003 |
| Childhood Residence X Desired Teaching | 52.837 | 4 | 13.209 | 2.716 | .029 |
| Error | 2514.268 | 517 | 4.863 | | |

Negative (Items 4,5,9,10,11,12,13,14,15)

| | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Residence | 121.815 | 2 | 60.908 | 5.471 | .004 |
| Desired Teaching | 310.865 | 2 | 155.432 | 13.961 | .000 |
| Childhood Residence X Desired Teaching | 327.633 | 4 | 80.658 | 7.245 | .000 |
| Error | 5756.133 | 517 | 11.134 | | |

TABLE 4

By Item Comparisons on Degree of Influence for Districts

| Growing Up Location | F | P | Tukey Post Hocs |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Salary | 2.744 | NS | |
| Most Resources | 4.008* | .019 | R>U |
| Most Supportive SPED | .390 | NS | |
| Most Discipline Prob | 2.260 | NS | |
| Most Severe Discip Prob | .922 | NS | |
| Strongest Administation | .085 | NS | |
| More Parent Involvement | .810 | NS | |
| Most Academic Freedom | .155 | NS | |
| Strictest Limits Teach | 1.514 | NS | |
| Least Parent Involvement | 1.788 | NS | |
| Weakest Administration | 1.199 | NS | |
| Least Discipline Probs | 1.815 | NS | |
| Highest Neg Att Exchild | 1.468 | NS | |
| Lowest Salaries | .320 | NS | |
| Least Resources | .268 | NS | |

*1=Strong Influence, 2=Influence, 3=No Influence

Desired Teaching Location

| | F | P | Tukey Post Hocs |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Salary | 7.198 | .001 | R>S,R>U |
| Most Resources | 8.094 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Most Supportive SPED | 2.475 | NS | |
| Most Discipline Probs | 1.152 | NS | |
| Most Severe Discip Probs | 1.495 | NS | |
| Strongest Administration | 2.896 | NS | |
| More Parent Involvement | .302 | NS | |
| Most Academic Freedon | 1.538 | NS | |
| Strictest Limits Teachers | .339 | NS | |
| Least Parent Involvement | 1.242 | NS | |
| Weakest Administration | .717 | NS | |
| Least Discipline Probs | .370 | NS | |
| Highest Neg Att Exchild | 6.917 | .001 | R>S |
| Lowest Salaries | 9.493 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Least Resources | 5.011 | .007 | R>S,R>U |

TABLE 4 A

Means and Standard Deviations of Amount of Influence of District Related Items

| | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ |
|---|---|---|
| High Salary | 1.941 | .681 |
| Most Resources | 1.593 | .620 |
| Most Supportive SPED | 1.398 | .585 |
| Most Discipline Problems | 2.005 | .703 |
| Most Severe Discipline Problems | 1.888 | .730 |
| Strongest Administration | 1.725 | .673 |
| More Parent Involvenment | 1.544 | .649 |
| Most Academic Freedom | 1.653 | .672 |
| Strictest Limits for Teachers | 1.824 | .686 |
| Most Parental Involvement | 1.833 | .736 |
| Weakest Administration | 1.810 | .713 |
| Least Discipline Problems | 2.018 | .716 |
| Neg Att Toward Exchild | 1.717 | .746 |
| Low Teacher Salaries | 1.939 | .699 |
| Least Educational Resources | 1.754 | .698 |

TABLE 5

ANOVA Perceptions of Social Setting By Childhood Residence and Desired Teaching Locations

Growing Up Location

| | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Residence | 48.495 | 2 | 24.247 | .588 | NS |
| Desired Teaching | 85.166 | 2 | 42.583 | 1.032 | NS |
| Childhood Residence X Desired Teaching | 129.003 | 4 | 32.251 | .782 | NS |
| Error | 21332.341 | 517 | 41.262 | | |

TABLE 6

Perceptions of Setting and Commitment Problems by Location Items in Percentage

| Problems | Where Would It Be a Problem | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | URBAN | SUBURBAN | RURAL |
| Go to bar with Fellow Teacher | 7.48 | 10.54 | 78.91 |
| Find a Date | 8.84 | 6.46 | 81.46 |
| Wear Modern (Radical) Clothing | 6.80 | 6.97 | 83.84 |
| Go to Theatre/Play | 11.22 | 9.52 | 69.39 |
| Socialize | 12.76 | 9.69 | 73.98 |
| Maintain Religious Practices | 28.74 | 8.84 | 54.59 |
| Deal w/Different Cultural/ Religious Community | 24.66 | 8.67 | 62.07 |
| Social Isolation | 16.33 | 5.78 | 73.98 |
| Cultural Isolation | 15.48 | 6.29 | 74.32 |
| Single Parenting | 40.99 | 8.67 | 45.75 |
| Gay/Lesbian Relationship | 5.01 | 7.65 | 81.80 |
| Live with (Married) Significant Other | 3.40 | 10.54 | 82.31 |
| Be Divorced | 6.12 | 11.56 | 75.68 |
| Join Special Interest Groups | 17.69 | 11.56 | 63.61 |
| Join Lodge/Fraternal Organization | 18.20 | 12.41 | 63.10 |

TABLE 7

Perceptions of the of Social Setting by Location for Growing Up Location and Desired Teaching Location

Positive (Items 1,2,3,4,5,7,12)

| | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Residence | 17.814 | 2 | 8.907 | 1.584 | NS |
| Desired Teaching | 21.088 | 2 | 10.544 | 1.875 | NS |
| Childhood Residence X Desired Teaching | 46.151 | 4 | 11.538 | 1.937 | NS |
| Error | 3078.694 | 517 | 5.955 | | |

Negative (Items 6,8,9,10,11,13,14)

| | SS | DF | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Residence | 49.952 | 2 | 24.976 | 4.194 | .016 |
| Desired Teaching | 40.293 | 2 | 20.146 | 3.383 | .035 |
| Childhood Residence X Desired Teaching | 37.889 | 4 | 9.472 | 1.684 | NS |
| Error | 2907.601 | 517 | 5.624 | | |

TABLE 8

One Way ANOVAS by Item for Influence of Social Setting Items for Growing up Location and Desired Teaching Location

| Growing Up Location | F | P | Tukey Post Hocs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Have Available Housing | 4.951 | .007 | S>U,R>U |
| Have Affordable Housing | .304 | NS | |
| Economic Stability | 3.814 | .023 | R>U |
| Entertainment Opportunities | 15.605 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Find Dates | 1.755 | NS | |
| High Crime | 1.611 | NS | |
| Best Police | .788 | NS | |
| Least Affordable Housing | .328 | NS | |
| Least Available Housing | .487 | NS | |
| Highest Cost | .188 | NS | |
| Limited Entertainment | 7.997 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Low Crime | .224 | NS | |
| Limited Police | .164 | NS | |
| Not Find Dates | 2.090 | NS | |
| **Desired Teaching Location** | | | |
| Have Available Housing | 7.888 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Have Affordable Housing | 1.496 | NS | |
| Economic Stability | 14.424 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Entertainment Opportunities | 37.552 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Find Dates | 12.142 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| High Crime | 2.467 | NS | |
| Best Police | .893 | NS | |
| Least Affordable Housing | .386 | NS | |
| Least Available Housing | .898 | NS | |
| Highest Cost | .681 | NS | |
| Limited Entertainment | 20.927 | .000 | R>S,R>U |
| Low Crime | .766 | NS | |
| Limited Police | .005 | NS | |
| Not Find Dates | 7.387 | .001 | R>S,R>U |

TABLE 9

Overall Means and Standard Deviations
or Perceptions of influence by Locations

| | $\bar{X}$ | $S_x$ |
|---|---|---|
| Have Available Housing | 1.752 | .678 |
| Have Affordable Housing | 1.637 | .654 |
| Economic Stability | 1.696 | .608 |
| Entertainment Opportunities | 2.145 | .673 |
| Find Dates | 2.431 | .691 |
| High Crime | 1.588 | .660 |
| Best Police | 1.782 | .609 |
| Least Affordable Housing | 1.756 | .651 |
| Least Available Housing | 1.810 | .655 |
| Highest Cost | 1.668 | .642 |
| Limited Entertainment | 2.168 | .692 |
| Low Crime | 1.787 | .630 |
| Limited Police | 1.888 | .615 |
| Not Finding Dates | 2.401 | .691 |

## References


Barker, B.O., & Beckner, W.E. (1987). Preservice training for rural teachers: A survey. Rural Educator, 8, 1-4.

Bryant, M.T. (1987). Rural school boards and teacher transience. Rural Educator, 9, 7-12.

Bull, K.S., & Hyle, A. (1989). Recruiting and retaining rural teachers: Some reported alternatives. Journal of Rural and Small Schools, 3 (3), 22-27.

Davis, J. (1987). Rurality and isolation in education. Rural Educator, 9, 11-15.

Gleadow, J., & Bandy, H. (1980). The identification skills and characteristics needed by county school teachers. Education Reports, University of Victoria.

Grant, C.A. (1989). Urban teachers: Their new colleagues and curriculum. Phi Delta Kappan, 764-770.

Helge, D.I. (1981). Problems in implementing comprehensive special education programming in rural areas. Exceptional Children, 47, 514-520.

Helge, D.I. (1984). The state of the art of rural special education. Exceptional Children, 50, 294-305.

Helge, D.I., & Marrs, L. (1981). Recruitment and retention in rural America. Paper presented at the National Conference on Special Education in Rural Areas, Murry, KT.

Hoyt, M.A. (1981). Preservice/inservice training options for rural school personnel (Fact sheet), ERIC Clearinghouse for Rural Education and Small Schools.

Kirmer, K., Lockwood, L., Mickler, W., & Sweeney, P. (1984). Regional rural special education programs. Exceptional Children, 50, 306-311.

Muse, I.D., Parsons, R.J., & Hoppe, E.M. (1975). A study of rural teachers and rural students as perceived by school administrators, teachers and students. Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University.

Seifert, E.H., & Kurtz, W.H. (1983). Teacher recruitment and retention strategies for small schools. San Marcos, TX: Southwest Texas State University, Small Schools Resource Center.

Sharp, R. (1974). The concept of cultural deprivation. Unpublished memo, cited in R. Nash, (1980). Schooling in Rural Societies. London:Methune.

Sher, J.P. (1978). A proposal to end federal neglect of rural schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 60, 280-282.

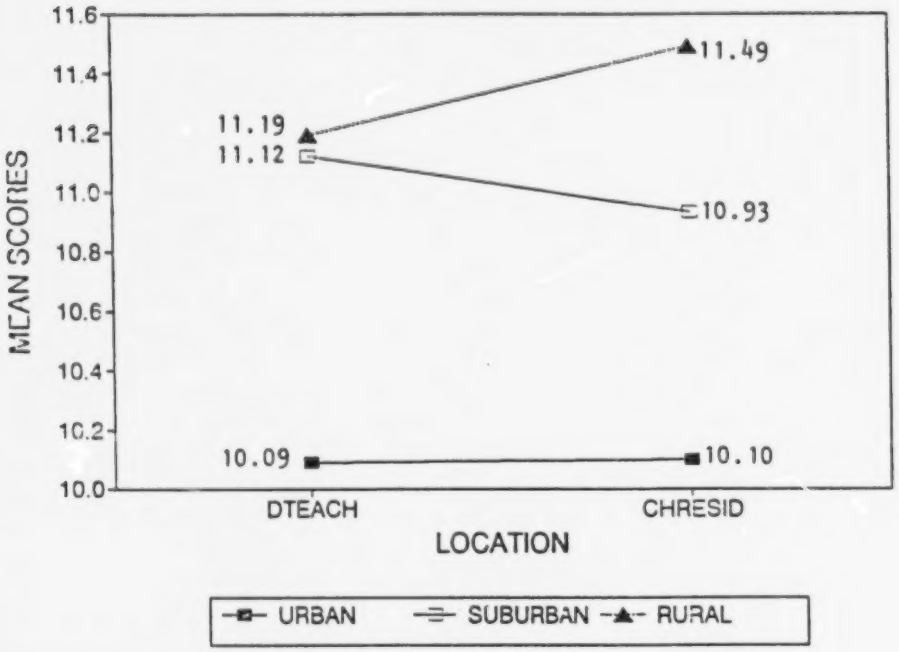
Sher, J.P. (1977). Education in rural America: A reassessment of conventional wisdom, Boulder: Westview.

Swift, D. (1984). Finding and keeping teachers: Strategies for small schools. Las Cruces, NM: ERIC Digest. (Education Document Reproduction Service Number, ED 259875).

Williams, N., & Cross, W.K. (1985). Early field experience: A recipe for rural teacher retention. Paper presented at the Annual National Rural and Small Schools Conference, Bellingham, WH.

# APPENDIX

## Graph 1 Perceptions of Districts
### Positive Items




Main Effect DTEACH

U<R, U<S

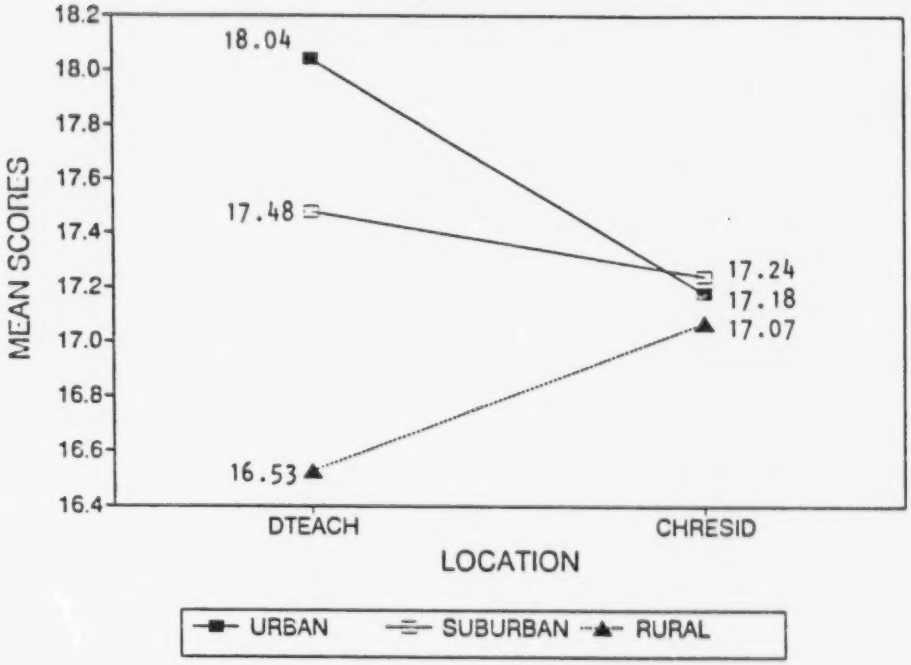
Main Effect Chresid

U<S, U<R, S<R

Interaction

Those who grew up Rural have a somewhat less positive view of Rural Districts if they want to teach there.

## Graph 2 Perceptions of Districts
### Negative Items




Main Effect DTEACH

R<S,R<U

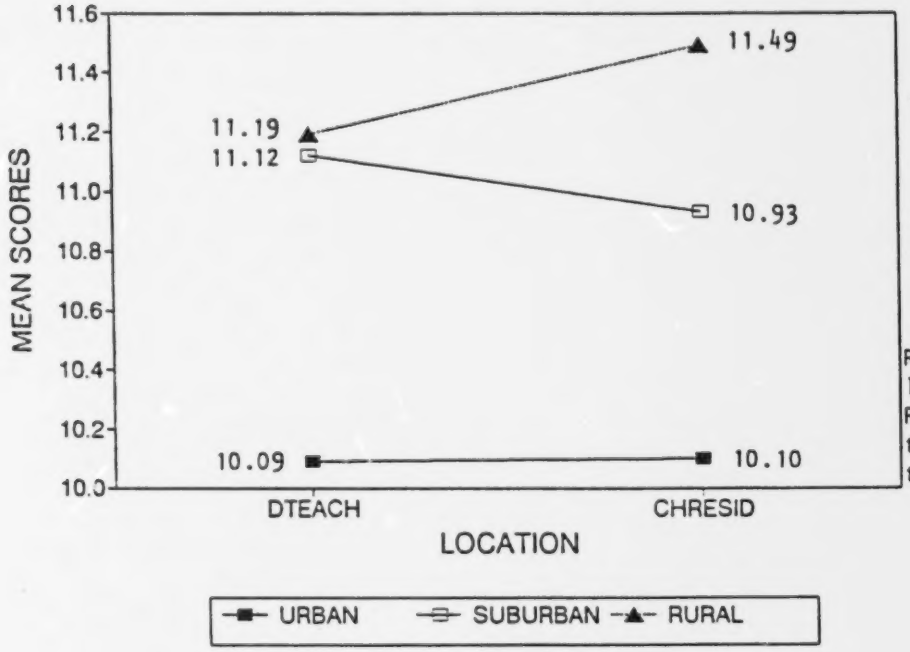
Main Effect Chresid

No sign. diff.

Interaction

Urban increases and Rural decreases in desire to teach.

## Graph 1 Perceptions of Districts
Positive Items




Main Effect Chresid

U<S,U<R,S<R

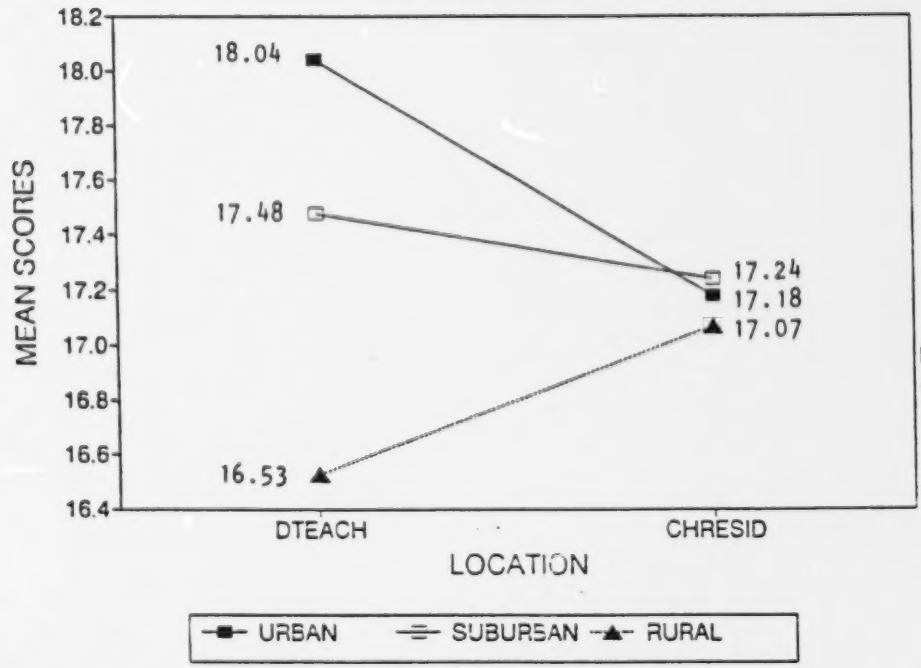
Main Effect DTEACH

U<R,U<S

Interaction

Those who grew up Rural have a somewha less positive view c Rural districts if they want to teach there.

## Graph 2 Perceptions of Districts
Negative Items




Main Effect Chre

No Sign. Diff.

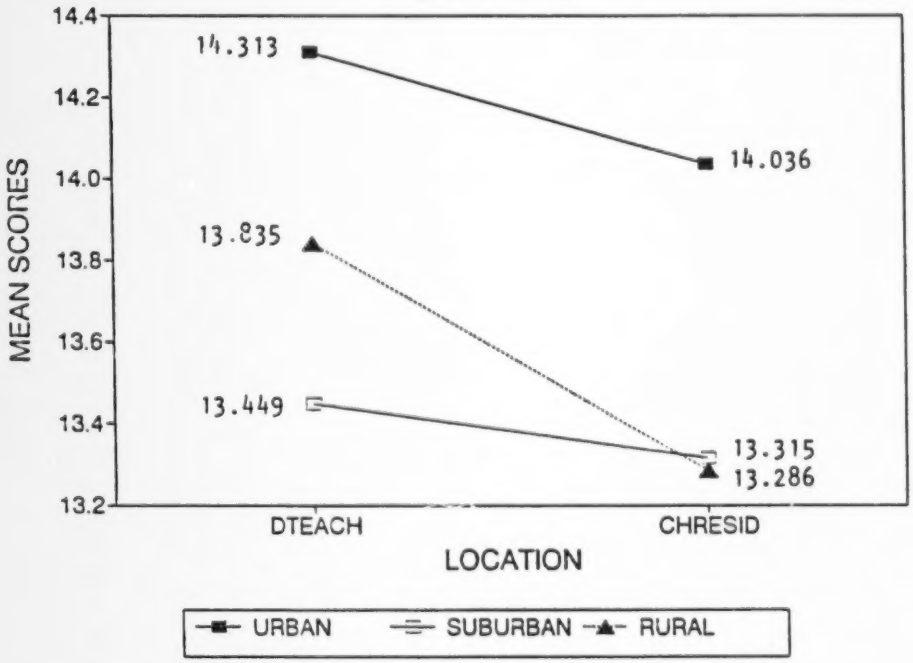
Main Effect DTEA

R<S,R<U

Interaction

Urban increases Rural decreases i desire to teach.

## Graph 3 Perceptions of Social Setting
### Positive Items




Main Effect DTEACH

U>S

Main Effect CHRESID

U>R

OSU

Oklahoma State University

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078-0254
NORTH MURRAY HALL 116
405-744-6040

Dear Special Education Major:

We would like to ask your assistance in a research project. The questionnaire which is attached is designed to solicit your opinion on your reasons for being in special education and on rural, urban, and suburban teaching environments. We realize your time is valuable; but if you would take a few minutes to respond, it would be greatly appreciated. Data from this survey will be used to help recruit and place special education teachers in appropriate job environments; therefore, your input is extremely important to the profession..

Please carefully answer all the questions. You will need to circle the appropriate response or fill in the requested information. Your responses will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance for your time and valuable assistance.

Sincerely,

Teri L. Bell
Doctoral Student
Special Education
Oklahoma State University

Pauline Lambeth
Associate Professor
SCEC Sponsor
Oklahoma State University

CENTENNIAL
1890 • 1990

Celebrating the Past . Preparing for the Future

## I. Information About You

### A. Your Training

1. In which of the following areas are you certified or currently training to be certified? (Check all that apply)

   (a) ___Emotionally Disturbed
   (b) ___Hearing Impaired
   (c) ___Learning Disabled
   (d) ___Mentally Handicapped
   (e) ___Physically Handicapped
   (f) ___Visually Impaired
   (g) ___Mildly Handicapped
   (h) ___Moderately Handicapped
   (i) ___Severely Handicapped
   (j) ___Profoundly Handicapped
   (k) ___Multihandicapped
   (l) ___Other (please list)_____

2. Which level would you prefer to teach?

   ___Primary
   ___Elementary
   ___Junior/Middle
   ___High School

### B. Your Background

1. Age _____

2. Gender _____Male _____Female

3. Ethnicity (check one)

   (a) ___Black (d) ___Caucasian
   (b) ___Native American (e) ___Hispanic
   (c) ___Oriental (f) ___Other (Specify)_____

4. Present marital status (check one)

   ___Married ___Single ___Divorced ___Widowed

5. Number of children? _____

6. Where did you live during the majority of your childhood?

   (a) ___Primarily in an urban area (population greater than 50,000)
   (b) ___Primarily in a suburban area (community outside of, but adjoining, a city of 50,000 or more)
   (c) ___Primarily in a rural area (population less than 50,000)
   (d) ___A mix of the above with less than 50% of the time in any one area.

7. Has anyone in your family ever been educationally diagnosed as having any learning problems?

   Yes ___ No ___

## II. Perceptions of Special Education

### A. Why Are You Studying Special Education

Please select among the following statements the degree to which these factors influenced you in your decision to teach exceptional learners. Use the following key: Strongly Influenced = SI, Slightly Influenced = I, No Influence = NI. Circle your choice.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Smaller class size. | SI | I | NI |
| 2. | Generally slightly higher pay. | SI | I | NI |
| 3. | Shortages in special educators. | SI | I | NI |
| 4. | Desire to help the "less fortunate". | SI | I | NI |
| 5. | Personal contact with an exceptional child. | SI | I | NI |
| 6. | Desire to work with children with whom other teachers prefer not to work. | SI | I | NI |
| 7. | Taking a course that introduced you to exceptional children. | SI | I | NI |

### B. Expectations

1. Some states offer additional pay to work with exceptional children. Did you know that when you chose special education as a major?
   ___Yes ___No

2. Did you have any previous contact with an exceptional individual prior to choosing your major?
   ___Yes ___No

3. Were you aware of the shortage of special education teachers across the country before you chose your major?
   ___Yes ___No

4. Was special education your first choice as a college major?
   ___Yes ___No

5. Which of the following duties would you expect to perform in the school where you would like to teach?

   ___Club Sponsor
   ___Cafeteria Duty
   ___Bus Driver
   ___Yearbook/Journalism
   ___Coaching
   ___Playground
   ___Bus Duty

## III. Perceptions of Working Locations

### A. Perceptions of Districts

**SET A**

Based on your opinion, circle the one type of district that you feel is best described by the following statements. Use the following key:

Urban = U
Suburban = S
Rural = R

**SET B**

Would this be an important determinant when you were choosing a work location? Use the following key:

Strong Influence = SI
Influence = I
No Influence = NI

Circle one answer per set.

| | | SET A | | | SET B | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Highest teacher's salaries. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 2. | Most educational resources. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 3. | Most supportive to special needs children. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 4. | Most discipline problems. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 5. | Most severe discipline problems. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 6. | Strongest administrators. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 7. | More parental involvement. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 8. | Most academic freedom for teachers. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 9. | Strictest limits set on teachers. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 10. | Least parental involvement. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 11. | Weakest administration. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 12. | Least discipline problems. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 13. | Most negative attitudes towards special needs children. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 14. | Lowest teachers' salaries. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 15. | Least educational resources. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |

**B. Perceptions of Settings**

1. In which of the following settings Urban = U, Suburban = S, Rural = R would the following be most likely to cause a problem for a new teacher.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Going to a bar with a fellow teacher. | U | S | R |
| b. | Finding an appropriate person in the community to date. | U | S | R |
| c. | Wearing modern (radical) clothing. | U | S | R |
| d. | Going to a theatre or play. | U | S | R |
| e. | Finding adequate avenues for socialization. | U | S | R |
| f. | Maintain current religious practices. | U | S | R |
| g. | Dealing with a specific cultural or religious based community that is different from one's own. | U | S | R |
| h. | Social isolation. | U | S | R |
| i. | Cultural isolation. | U | S | R |
| j. | Single parenting. | U | S | R |
| k. | Maintaining a gay or lesbian relationship. | U | S | R |
| l. | Living with an unmarried significant other. | U | S | R |
| m. | Being divorced. | U | S | R |
| n. | Joining special interest groups (health, exercise, quilting). | U | S | R |
| o. | Joining a lodge or fraternal organization. | U | S | R |

2. If you were given a choice, which area would you prefer to live? _____Urban _____Suburban ____Rural

3. If given a choice, which type of district would you prefer to teach? _____Urban _____Suburban _____Rural

C. **Perceptions of Locations**

**SET A**

Based on your opinion, circle the type of location that you feel is best described by the following statements. Use the following key:
Urban = U
Suburban = S
Rural = R

**SET B**

Would this be an important determinant when you were choosing a work location? Use the following key:
Strong Influence = SI
Influence = I
No = Influence = NI

| | | SET A | | | SET B | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Most likely to have available housing? | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 2. | Most likely to have affordable housing. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 3. | Greatest economical stability. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 4. | Greatest selection of entertainment opportunities. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 5. | Greatest opportunity for a single person to find dates. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 6. | Highest possibility of crime. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 7. | Best police protection. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 8. | Least affordable housing. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 9. | Least available housing. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 10. | Highest cost of living. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 11. | Most limited in entertainment. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 12. | Lowest possibility of crime. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 13. | Police protection limited. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |
| 14. | Least likely to offer single adults the opportunity for dating. | U | S | R | SI | I | NI |

Please return this questionnaire to
your SCEC Sponsor or to Teri L. Bell
309 N. Murray Hall
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078


BEST COPY AVAILABLE